DW BULLETIN
THE MONTHLY NEWS 'ZINE
Nº 49 £1·20 NOVEMBER 1987

ON 22nd NOVEMBER IAN LEVINE—THE HISTORIAN AND WORLD'S LEADING AUTHORITY ON DOCTOR WHO—WILL APPEAR ON THE BBC's 'DID YOU SEE ?' PROGRAMME OUTLINING THE REASONS BEHIND DOCTOR WHO's ASTONISHING DECLINE IN RECENT YEARS; FROM THE DRAMATIC, RATINGS-WINNING INSTITUTION TO ITS PRESENT DAY UNPOPULAR PANTOMIMESQUE COUNTERPART. IN A FINAL DESPERATE BID TO RESTORE DOCTOR WHO's CREDITIBITY FOR ITS 25th ANNIVERSARY NEXT YEAR, WE ARE LAUNCHING THIS CAMPAIGN THROUGH THE NATION's PRESS ASKING THEM TO HELP US HIGHLIGHT THE REAL REASON FOR THE PROGRAMME's FAILING AND TO BRING PRESSURE ON THE BBC TO FINALLY REMEDY THE SITUATION; SYLVESTER McCOY IS THE LEAST OF THE SHOW'S PROBLEMS, RATHER IT IS THE PROGRAMME CONSTRUCTED AROUND HIM BY A HOPELESSLY INADEQUATE PRODUCER THAT IS SOUNDING THE SERIES' DEATH-KNELL, AS IAN LEVINE EXPLAINS MORE THOROUGHLY IN THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE.

IN A SURVEY LAST YEAR, 99% OF READERS OF THIS DOCTOR WHO FAN-MAGAZINE EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO SEE A NEW, IMAGINATIVE PRODUCER EMPLOYED ON THE SHOW; AT EVERY CONVENTION EX-PRODUCTION CREW EXPRESS THEIR INTENSE DISSATISFACTION AT THE DIRECTION THE SERIES HAS SINCE TAKEN; AND THE ABYSMAL AUDIENCE RATINGS OF 4-5 MILLION SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. THE TIME HAS COME TO TAKE ACTION BECAUSE . . .

THE FANS, THE PUBLIC, THE PROFESSIONALS ALL UNANIMOUSLY AGREE;

JN~T MUST GO *NOW*

By IAN LEVINE

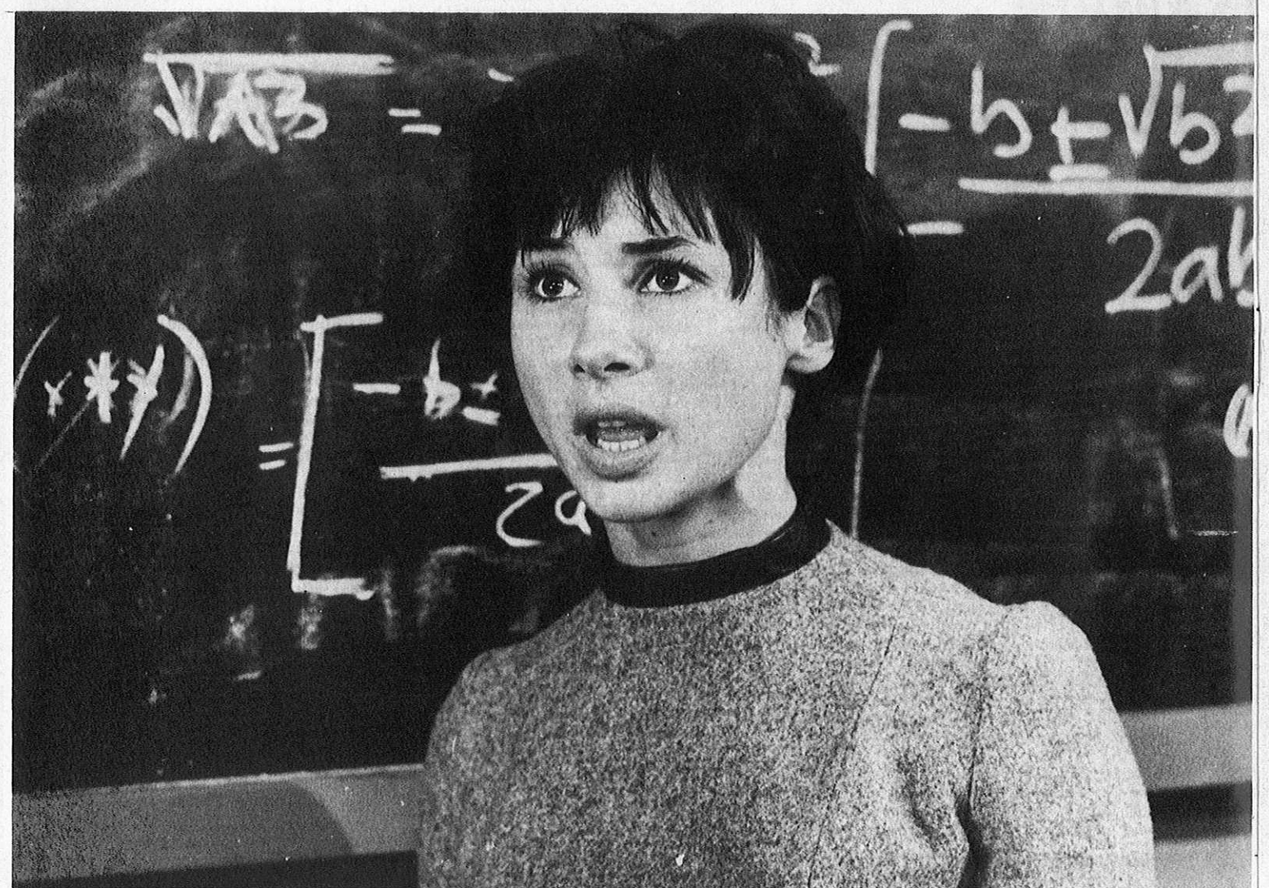
At the press launch for the BBC's autumn season, Michael Grade said, quite plainly, that he's "...*not really concerned with the ratings so much as the programme's standards...*" He said words similar to that effect back in 1985 but then he also placed equal onus on the ratings. How sad that none of the press present saw the logic in probing behind the reasons for DOCTOR WHO's alarming slump in standards and how Michael Grade had, in effect, said he does not have staff competent enough to produce (to quote) *improved stories* with *imaginative characters*. But then, to 99·999% of the population, John Nathan-Turner (DOCTOR WHO's producer for the last eight years, in which time the show has been cancelled, halved in episode count, ridiculed by Grade in public, and has had its script editor quit in disgust at the producer's antics...) is a total non-entity: nobody knows who he is and probably wouldn't care to. On the other hand because of the knowledge we have as fans we are more than aware of the rot inside that has been silently coroding away the magical essence of a once, quite simply, brilliant concept, but attempting to campaign to the BBC for a better series over the past couple of years has been like banging our heads against a brick wall ! And it is the public, as well as the fans, whom the BBC have attempted to dupe into watching trashy, light entertainment panto antics which could just as easily be brilliant drama with a thoughtful change of producer, but it is purely because the British public are not capable of being duped in this way that they are not watching DOCTOR WHO any longer. For example, twelve years ago when the series *was* producing intelligent and dramatic stories the public registered their approval and rewarded this hard work with ratings of 12-14 million compared to today's laughable 4-5 million. Is this not proof enough that the BBC are wasting licence payer's money by spending vast amounts of money on rubbish nobody wants to watch—and then they have the nerve to announce that the show is on trial because its standards are slipping and ratings have tumbled !?! And could that be why the BBC have stopped showing DOCTOR WHO repeats in recent years; because they are actually embarrassed at the superior production values the show used to boast and don't wish to remind the public of how brilliant the show *could* be again ??

As I write we are half way through the 24th Season , and the problem—as has been suggested by most of the misguided press—has nothing to do with the new Doctor Sylvester McCoy who, under a decent producer, would probably be quite capable of producing a little charisma—unlike his two predecessors. No, the age old problem still lies with a totally sterile and disinterested producer who stubbornly refuses to face the fact of the pantomime edge he has tarnished the series with. This was ironically proven by his recent classic quote on the BBC's Open Air:"...*as something of a pantomime expert—because I write and direct it usually at Christmas—I see no similarity whatsoever between DOCTOR WHO and pantomime*"! So, what "improved stories" and "imaginative characters" have we been treated to so far ?

Well, the first adventure—TIME AND THE RANI—must rank as one of the very worst DOCTOR WHO stories *ever* ! In my opinion it was inanely, disgustingly and appallingly written by the most talentless pair of hacks ever inflicted on the series. Pip and Jane Baker should have been laid to rest after the dreadful TERROR OF THE VERVOIDS last year (or better still the equally contrived MARK OF THE RANI in 1985). Any producer worth his salt would have immediately seen how unsuited to DOCTOR WHO they were, but no, John Nathan-Turner—charmed by their nauseating and tedious sycophantic purrings at DOCTOR WHO conventions rather than the scriptual attributes they possessed—decided to repay their undying loyalty resulting in them writing a total mockery of the final episode of the TRIAL OF A TIME LORD. But this time they've surely managed to surpass all their previous efforts in one ! The very idea of a middle-aged Kate O'Mara prancing around dressed like Bonnie Langford and trying to imitate her whining accent belongs on Galloping Galaxies, NOT in DOCTOR WHO, as does the equally inane scenario of the new Doctor tripping over himself and uttering lines which could have been written by a kindergarten five year old, such as:"*Absence makes the nose grow longer*"! But the script alone was not to blame for this atrocious piece of television. It suffered from the tacky standard of direction, acting and lighting synonymous with a John Nathan-Turner production, and the sight of Kate O'Mara attempting to out-gloss her Dynasty role—complete with shoulder pads and lurex—really reminded me with a sickening crunch of another of Nathan-Turner's immortal and tactless quotes: "*DOCTOR WHO is the new Morecambe and Wise Show of today — everyone wants to appear in it.*" Whatever happened to the good old days of drama and tension for heavens sake ? The only respectable aspect of the entire production were the new titles which weren't too bad—until that cringe-inducing wink at the end—but no variation of the theme music has ever come close to the original, something that Nathan-Turner will, sadly , never ever understand. I think Bonnie Langford summed it all up in episode two by saying: "*Do you really expect me to listen to this dri-*

(Continued bottom of page 3...)

OPERATION 'WHO



THE 'DOCTOR WHO' PRODUCER THAT NEVER WAS

John Nathan-Turner, who occasionally produces the Beeb's DOCTOR WHO series, has been up to his busybody antics yet again. This time the self-appointed guardian of the series has interfered in the release of Titan's long-awaited script-book of the very first DOCTOR WHO story which has resulted in its delay. Reading the proof of the book—originally scheduled for last month—he was most alarmed to see that it contained, of all things, the script for—wait for it—the pilot episode ! Immediately donning his Inquisitor's hat, he ordered Titan to drop it from the book. Why ? Because he pettily maintained that because it wasn't of broadcast quality then neither was it of publishable quality ! However he overlooks the fact that despite the purge of DOCTOR WHO episodes from the BBC's archives in the '70s, this episode was retained and indeed has been allowed to be shown at a convention in Britain, but most importantly the Titan book can only be of interest to fans of the series interested in noting the contrasts between that and the subsequently screened opening episode and is not being forced onto an unsuspecting public. And what of the expense Titan went to in preparing the book which they have now had to delay in order to extract the offending script and thus defeating the whole purpose for selecting the premier DOCTOR WHO story in the first place; to show the direction the show might originally have taken.

But this is just one isolated example of this extraordinary man's extra-curricular activities. For example, he also regularly frequents the DOCTOR WHO merchandise shop at Longleat—as he similarly used to travel to Wapping—much as a health inspector might visit a dubious takeaway restaurant. His 'ego-trips' to America have been well-documented, and can anyone ever forget his own embarrassing efforts at book-writing ? The financial aspect aside, this all makes one wonder how he ever found the time to produce DOCTOR WHO, but then considering he was apparently always at such a loose end as demonstrated by the above is it really any surprise the series is in such a mess, produced by a blasé man who, it seems, would much rather have been on the pay-roll of BBC Enterprises from the start . . . ?

A PLEA TO KEEP JN-T AS FAR AWAY FROM 'DR WHO - THE MOVIE' AS POSSIBLE!

There is no doubt that news of the imminent DOCTOR WHO—The Movie has produced a spark in the flickering dying embers of today's DOCTOR WHO, and whilst one assumes that the lessons from the '60s Dalek movies will have been learned, the prospect of JN-T acting as the film's 'creative consultant' is just too awful to contemplate. Hasn't the man already done enough to destroy the popularity of the concept on the small box without wanting to curse what little chance it has left of restoring its credibility on the big screen ? No doubt he will proclaim that it was always his idea to translate DOCTOR WHO to this medium, but he should be kept away from any involvement with this new project if it is to stand any chance of success.

Stick to what you're best at John; your annual Xmas pantos!!

TOO STYLISH NEW TITLES

Having now had two stories in which to become fully accustomed to the "dynamic" new titles, now seems a more appropriate time in which to review them—away from the euphoric hype of its original unveiling. Aside from the tacky looking scrunched up pieces of paper floating intermittently across the Milky Way (I assume they're meant to represent meterorites ?), the overwhelming ground for complaint has of course been that awful wink which immediately stamps the light entertainment panto feel onto the proceedings before even the opening staged reprise from the previous week's episode! And, of course, there's the finale with the garish new logo which gives every impression that it was cobbled together from two odd sheets of Letraset, gaudily coloured of course to match the contents of the episode !

DWB, 5 WHITEGATE GARDENS, HARROW-WEALD, MIDDLESEX HA3 6BW

Next month DWB will have good cause to celebrate since it will mark our 50th issue—a proud achievement for any fanzine to boast of ! It certainly seems like more that 50 months since DWB began way back in August 1983 in the days of the humble photo-copier and Tipp-ex correction strips, and because we are in such a justifiably self-indulgent mood, for a special anniversary feature next issue I would like readers who have been with us from or near the very beginning to write in and tell me how they feel the 'zine has evolved over the years , both the high points and the low points, and indeed where we can go from here. There is no word limit—we will simply be interested to hear whatever you have to say about DWB in a retrospective study—so please write away ! (Articles should be in by November 23rd, oops, another anniversary: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY DOCTOR WHO"!).

The 50th DWB issue will be out on December 7th which—as Wholook editor Gary Wales observantly pointed out to me recently—is also the day on which the final episode of DRAGONFIRE is transmitted—the 150th DOCTOR WHO story—and the start of the 50th calendar month of 1987! All this, together with the fact that my mum celebrates her 50th birthday next month—has nothing to do with careful planning, but it's a rather bizarre and uncanny coincidence don't you think ?! (Incidentally Gary—who is currently re-adapting Starburst's new logo—has completely rejuvenated our own now ancient logo, many thanks Gary).

Finally a vital plea; subscriptions are coming up for renewal and when yours expires your original coupon will be returned with your final issue. PLEASE may we insist that you resubscribe well in advance of the following issue since our coffers run dangerously low at this time and we still have to clothe and feed our printers (see page 13 if your subscription expires this issue). Till next month—GARY

DWB#49, NOVEMBER 1987

COVER—JN-T MUST GO *NOW*

2: FLASHBACK—The very first episode of DOCTOR WHO screened 24 years ago this month. (Top: Barbara(Jacqueline Hill) and Ian (William Russell) investigate the mysterious Totters Lane junk yard, below: Susan(Carol Anne Ford), an unearthly child at Coal Hill School).

3: WHOCHAT—Special JN-T edition.

4-5: NEWS

6-7,12: LETTERS, Part 6 of THE PYRAMIDS OF MARS

8-11: INTERVIEW—Barry Letts and Terrance Dicks discuss their tailor-made partnership as producer and script editor of DOCTOR WHO in the early '70s.

13: DWB 1987 WINTER SPECIAL—Preview.

14-15: REVIEW—PARADISE TOWERS by Peter Anghelides, your views and star ratings

16: SPECIAL XMAS OFFER—An opportunity to purchase DOCTOR WHO merchandise at vastly reduced prices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS: Peter Anghelides, Terrance Dicks, Pat Fenech, Barry Letts and Andrew Szabo.

PUZZLE CORNER

Complete this sequence: THE TRIBE OF GUM, THE CHASE, THE WAR MACHINES, THE HIGHLANDERS, ROBOT, FULL CIRCLE, _____ ?

LAST MONTH'S ANSWER: They are all companions who have never faced the Daleks. (WINNER: Peter Murphy from Morecambe).

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(Cont'd)

vel ?" Quite.

Surely the next story could only have been an improvement ? PARADISE TOWERS actually had a half-way decent script; a rarity in recent years. Sylvester McCoy's acting improved but Bonnie Langford (miscast by Nathan-Turner in 1985) was as nauseating as ever, and apart from certain embarrassments like the cardboard Pex, the script did indeed display a bunch of "imaginative characters". So where did it all go wrong, ending up as the garbage thrown-up on the screen ? There were various bones of contention here, most glaringly being Nick Mallets disgraceful direction. He totally misunderstood and ruined the script, but the point is he should *never* have been invited back on to the show after the hash he made of last year's MYSTERIOUS PLANET. This dreadful piece of four-square direction made even previous Nathan-Turner-cast yawn-inducing directors like Ron Jones and Peter Moffat seem positively talented by comparison. Why oh why won't Nathan-Turner attempt to use good directors ? As usual it was brightly lit, the acting hammy and good scriptual ideas were lost in the realisation. Most miscast of all was Richard Briers who turned in probably the most over-the-top performance since THE HORNS OF NIMON. It was a fatal mistake to cast him as the chief villain since he is a TV personality so well known in his own right (comedy shows and game shows) which makes it impossible for anyone to believe in him as anyone but himself. The tension built up in the script in episode four was totally lost when he played the possessed scenes as though he were Inspector Blakey in On the Buses ! An abortionate piece of miscasting. And how I prayed that 'Tilda' and 'Tabby' had managed to finish off Bonnie Langford by the beginning of part three. Isn't it frustrating that you used to actually *care* about what happened to the Doctor and his companion, but who could honestly give a damn about what happens to Bonnie Langford in the show ?! There was also the usual Nathan-Turner ruination of characters with Tilda and Tabby, for example , dressed like extras from a Mother Goose pantomime ! The script portrayed them as two little old ladies in the mould of Arsenic and Old Lace—instead they came across more as The Trollettes (a drag duo JN-T uses in his pantos) living in their sparkly clean Habitat showroom !

(Concluded overleaf...)

Nathan-Turner's appalling track-record on the series is proof that while he remains, like a malignant cancer he will only get worse. A new script editor and Doctor are not enough if you have at the helm of the programme an egotistical producer who, for eight years, has blatantly refused to listen to those more experience than himself because he is the producer and so therefore he *must* know best. He has demonstrated on numerous occasions, including at DOCTOR WHO conventions, that he cannot accept even the slightest criticism of his work however constructively framed. Well, for his information eight years is seven too many when your name's Nathan-Turner, but if *any* programme is going to adapt to new innovations and remain fresh and interesting it is essential that the whole production team changes every three or four years ! No-one can possibly dispute that what little chance the show now has of restoring even some of its credibility and former glory for its 25th anniversary, then a new and imaginative producer must be implemented *IMMEDIATELY*, before Nathan-Turner does any further damage. The BBC have absolutely NO excuse in retaining his services yet another year since he is now freelance and so are no longer obliged to find another series for him to work on (in case they were worried about the damage he might inflict on a different show).

As for a suitable replacement, they have only to look around the BBC itself to see that many of their present production staff possess a genuine ability to simply get on with the job of producing and performing that job as well as they possibly can. The merits of Howard's Way director Michael E.Briant have been shouted from the rooftops, and what about Graeme Harper, Victor Pemberton, Peter Grimwade . . . and not overlooking the fact that some of the show's finest producers were completely new blood and young and inexperienced, but they seriously cared for the show and wanted only the very best production standards available (Verity Lambert—the original producer—and Philip Hinchcliffe to name just two) so the possibilities are endless. So let's be done once and for all with this disgraceful charade at the BBC and restore DOCTOR WHO's past standards forthwith if only for one more series to prove how inexhaustible its format can be with a change in the style of production.

The BBC will also reap the financial rewards a restoration in WHO's popularity would provide (overseas sales, merchandise etc.) and stem the mounting decline worldwide induced by Nathan Turner's incessant 'Panto in space'. Again, the possibilities are endless, but the BBC must act *NOW !*

I'm about to be filmed for the 22nd November edition of Did You See? outlining some of the views which I've set out here, but somehow I feel I may be futilely wasting my time . Almost three years ago I went on ITN's News at One to plead the case for DOCTOR WHO being saved after it was cancelled by Grade, but watching the bastardized version of the series these last few years I really wish I hadn't bothered. Hopefully the Did You See? programme will alert the BBC (if they don't already know) of the sheer incompetency at the heart of DOCTOR WHO and will immediately act to breath new life into the series in time for its jubilee year. If not I seriously doubt whether there will be very many fans, let alone viewers, to see the Doctor unceremoniously bundled off our screens forever after its 25th anniversary in 1988—or was that the BBC's deliberate intention all along . . .

JUST ONE OF THE 101 THINGS TO DO WITH A CLAPPED OUT BBC PRODUCER (C/O ANTHONY HOWE) !

'DOCTOR WHO-THE MOVIE' UNDER WAY

A press release concerning the forthcoming film made many of the papers in early October , including this article in The Stage of October 8th : "TV's most popular time traveller Dr WHO is to continue his inter-stellar commuting for at least one more series despite losing his ratings battle with the more down-to-earth inhabitants of Coronation Street. Producer John Nathan-Turner has put paid to rumours that Sylvestor McCoy's first outing as the irrepresible Time Lord would be the Doctor's last, with the news that McCoy will definitely be back in autumn in a new series next year.

"But it looks as though McCoy will have a rival for the attentions of the world's WHO fanatics; a big-screen version is due to be released next November to coincide with DOCTOR WHO's 25th anniversary. The deal has just been completed after lengthy negotiations between the BBC and independent film producers Coast to Coast, the company behind C4's high-tech hero Max Headroom.

"A spokesman for the London based company, John Humphreys, said, 'We intend to make it a big budget film with extensive and advanced special effects. I can promise you we won't be using the BBC's infamous quarry.'"

DOCTEUR QUI !

French television have apparently reversed their decision never to show DOCTOR WHO and for the first time the series will be shown on station TF1 commencing with ROBOT.

BULMAN FILLED IN

DELTA AND THE BANNERMEN star, Don Henderson, is facing the axe after 10 years as TV detective Bulman. Commenting to TV Today about the decision , he said: "It looks as though there is a similar situation as there is at the BBC over DOCTOR WHO. We all know Michael Grade has decided he doesn't like DOCTOR WHO so he's done everything he can to kill it off."

GRADE "UNCONCERNED" AT RATINGS

At the BBC's Autumn press launch in August, DOCTOR WHO featured prolifically among the many new series Michael Grade was quizzed about. One journalist queried the new time-slot and Grade answered: " I think you have to look at the demographics of this. Coronation Street has a strong and very large audience, but with largely older viewers. On Saturday last year there was a lot of direct competition and the delights of Mr.T etc. really proved to be unfair . I don't expect DOCTOR WHO under any circumstances to beat CS, but I do expect it to pick up a decent audience." When a journalist asked if this meant the show's future was secure, he said, "I am not really concerned with the ratings so much as the programme's standards: If the violence has been toned down; if the characterisations are more imaginative and drawn better; if the stories have improved; then irrespective of the viewing figures it will continue . . . However I do hear that it is better."

RATINGS

The ratings for parts 3 and 4 of TIME AND THE RANI have increased slightly following the dramatic plunge of episode 2 from 5·1 to 4·2 million. Part 3 limped up to 4·3 million and episode 4 ended the story with 4·9 million viewers, placing the episodes at numbers 81 and 86 in the TV Top 100 respectively. But it is when measured against other programmes that the real extent of these appalling figures can be gauged, as these comparable programmes transmitted in the same week as episode 4 illustrate:

52: Hi-de-Hi (after WHO)	7.6
60: Telly Addicts (old slot)	7.1
66: Wogan	6.4
74: The Flintstones	5.7
76: Rolf Harris Cartoon Time	5.6
79: The Muppet Babies	5.5
81: Barney Bear	5.4
85: Blue Peter	5.0
86: DOCTOR WHO	4.9
91: Roland Rat-The Series	4.4

VAL IN FRONT !

Val McCrimmon has overtaken designer Barry Newbery as DOCTOR WHO's most durable contributor. She recently A F M'd on PARADISE TOWERS, a job she has done off and on since THE SENSORITES in 1964!

DID YOU SEE ?

As mentioned in our cover story, Did You See?—BBC 2's Sunday evening television review programme—will involve DOCTOR WHO in its feature slot on the eve of its 24th anniversary on November 22nd. As well as attempting to fathom the reasons behind what has compelled so many people over three decades to the series, the feature will also consider why today's DOCTOR WHO is declining . John Nathan-Turner has been asked if he will be prepared to face criticisms against his style of production on air, but as of going to press it has not been confirmed whether he has indeed agreed to do so . . .

EX-PRO'S SLAM 'PANTO WHO'

Yet more eminent professionals from DOCTOR WHO's past have made their feelings known concerning today's production. Ex-acclaimed producers Barry Letts and Philip Hinchcliffe have recently registered their intense dissatisfaction to various fan quarters, with the latter very much dismayed that the series "...has sunk to the level of pantomime."

Incidentally Hinchcliffe has agreed to do a series of interviews with CMS for their forthcoming In Vision project on the Tom Baker years.

A BEEB / SUN COLLABORATION ?

In a series of 'Sun'-sational news items, The Sun newspaper has exchanged its well-earned tag as the most up-front tabloid on DOCTOR WHO news to the deceptive reputation it is more notorious for. At the end of September the 'news' paper—which was first to report of DOCTOR WHO's demotion to 14 episodes and Colin Baker's sacking—printed an 'exclusive' claiming BEEB AXE DOCTOR WHO AFTER 24 YEARS. Evidently realising they had premeditated this event by one season (the reporter, Kevin O'Sullivan , insists that Grade has confided to him that he definitely intends ending the series by its 25th anniversary), The Sun attempted to save face by lying that their original report was true but that the show had since been saved because, wait for it, "THOUSANDS OF FANS PROTESTED"!!! The same piece also points out that the new series is only pulling in five million viewers. But just a couple of weeks later The Sun joyously applaud Sylvester as "THE MAN WHO SAVED DOCTOR WHO" and even more mysteriously go on to add, in typical Nathan-Turneresque fashion, that:"RATINGS FOR THE PRESENT SERIES HAVE SOARED...TO 5.2m."

However, the piece does accurately conclude that: "THE HIGH-UPS AT THE BEEB ARE VERY PLEASED WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING." No doubt they indeed are since they now have all the ammunition they need (all time low ratings for the show) to cancel DOCTOR WHO once and for all !!

Most disturbingly of all , however, are the signs that this is a put-up job. Have we lost The Sun as an ally ?

LIES LIES LIES

Carry on Doctor! Who is saved by the fans

TELLY time lord Dr Who has been saved from extermination—by his fans.

BBC bosses wanted to bump off the colourful sci-fi character after his new series flopped in a TV ratings war against Coronation Street.

But they changed their minds after The Sun revealed their plans, and thousands of fans protested.

And last night producer John Nathan-Turner promised them TWO time travel treats next year.

There will be another TV series starring Sylvester McCoy as the Doctor, PLUS a special big-screen film to celebrate 25 years of Dr Who.

MOVIE

The movie, due to be released in November 1988, is being made by Coast To Coast, the people behind the cult Max Headroom series.

Spokesman John Humphreys says: "It will be a big-budget film with extensive special effects.

"I guarantee we won't be using the BBC's infamous gravel pit!"

Dr Who is pulling in less than five million viewers, despite star guests like Kate O'Mara and Richard Briers.

But producer Nathan-Turner says: "He is still amazingly popular. McCoy will definitely be back in action in a new series next year."

GARRY BUSHELL

Who is saved by new Doctor

By MARK CHADBOURN

BBC chiefs have hailed wacky actor Sylvester McCoy as the man who saved Doctor Who.

Controller Michael Grade has sent the new Time Lord a letter praising him for pulling the show back from the brink of cancellation.

McCoy, 44, has been assured there will be another 14 episodes next year.

SOARED

Ratings for the present series have soared by more than a million to 5.2m—despite tough competition from ITV's Coronation Street.

McCoy said: "The high-ups at the Beeb are very pleased with the way things have been going."

A new Who story—Delta And The Bannermen—starts on Monday with Bulman star Don Henderson and comics Ken Dodd and Stubby Kaye.

Beeb axe Dr Who

EXCLUSIVE

By KEVIN O'SULLIVAN

TELLY time traveller Dr Who is to be exterminated after an amazing 24 years, it was revealed last night.

It is Beeb bosses—not the Daleks—who will scrap the Time Lord and his Tardis at the end of the current series.

The space saga would have gone last year, but was reprieved when half a million fans protested.

Devoted

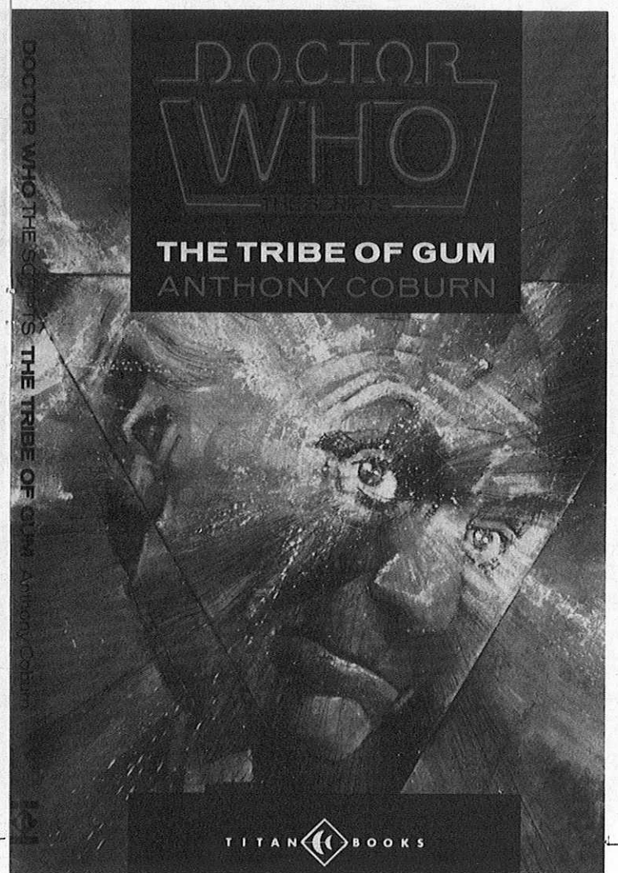
The new-look series has been losing viewers every week—despite big-name guest stars including Dynasty dazzler Kate O'Mara and funnyman Ken Dodd.

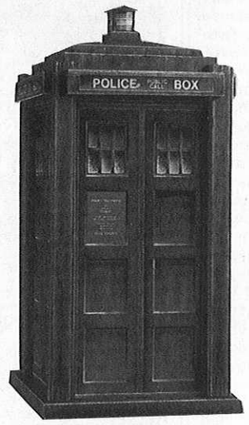
Even the new Doctor, played by Sylvester McCoy, is a turn-off for devoted fans—the regular audience is less than five million.

A spokesman for the Doctor Who Appreciation Society stormed: "It is like a nightmare come true."

book-shelf

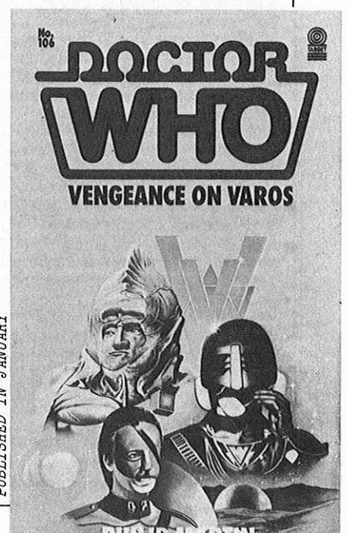
Out in December is the first of Titan's new script books at £2 95 (US; $6 95, Australia ; $8 95), available from Forbidden Planet in London and book shops everywhere. Also out in time for Christmas is an easy to assemble Tardis kit from W.H.Allen at £3 95. Designed by Mark Harris—of the Technical Manual fame—authentic results can be achieved without the aid of glue and scissors, as shown below. The pieces are die-cut and press out from the page and are assembled with special locking tabs.





On the Target front the final three stories of Season 24 have been commissioned and will be novelised by their respective script writers. Alister Pearson is set to do the covers for EDGE OF DESTRUCTION and THE SMUGGLERS, but meanwhile the cover for TIME AND THE RANI has been delayed because it was printed upside down (presumably the printer didn't realise it depicted Tetraps in repose!).

This month sees the release in hardback of THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET by Terrance Dicks, and John Lucarotti's THE MASSACRE in paperback out on the 19th.



PUBLISHED IN JANUARY

OVERSEAS SALES SAVED 'DOCTOR WHO'!

JOHN McELROY, WHOMOBILIA

I really cannot let David Ryan's letter in DWB#47 to go by unchallenged.

He repeats yet again the myth that the Americans are somehow responsible for every misfortune that has affected DOCTOR WHO. This is ridiculous—the real reason is far closer to home. American popularity has purely and simply increased the world-wide audience for the show, which is to every fan's benefit. With the show put "on hold" two years ago, the subsequent low viewing figures and the rapid demise of Colin Baker, I am convinced that were DOCTOR WHO only shown in Britain then it would have been cancelled there and then. The fact that it is still successfully sold to America, Australia etc. must have had a positive influence on the BBC bothering to re-cast the role.

Yes, it is true that the amount of merchandising has increased since America started showing the programme, but that is simple economics. The larger the audience, the greater the number of products that can be marketed. I cannot speak on behalf of other companies mentioned in David's letter, but I can assure you that Whomobilia relies on both the UK and US markets for sufficient sales to make it viable. I could NOT exist solely on the sales in America any more than I could exist on the sales at home. If fans do not consider a product good value, then they are under no obligation to buy it. I am sorry David regards 80p for a BBC photograph as "extortionate". It is a fraction of what the BBC used to charge fans, and also, size for size, it is considerably less than the current Gerry Anderson photographs advertised in S.I.G..

The key to the price of Whomobilia photographs lies with the agreement between the BBC and Equity (the actors' union). Each artiste appearing in a photograph is paid a fee, which is based on sales of 500 of that photograph. Some of the most popular shots have indeed sold that many, but the less popular ones—such as the guest stars—sell nowhere near that amount and are therefore subsidised by sales of the big-sellers. If I were to limit the total number of photographs available to 10 or 12 then the price probably could drop slightly, but that would not be providing the service I currently am proud to offer.

"IF I CAN'T BE THE PRODUCER, NO ONE WILL"

MICHAEL MULLARKY, Cincinatti, USA

By now the new season will have started. I don't think you'll be liking it and I'm not the only American fan who thinks that but I happen to think what I do because of a certain source of information I came in contact with a month ago when a local PBS station ran an interview with JN-T, Sylvester McCoy and Jon Pertwee. What the first had to say was interesting, though hardly surprising. What's JN-T's goal? "To put more..."—more what? More quality acting? More enthralling direction? More meaningful scripts? No, none of that, the dear fellow wants more humour in the show. This I find interesting.

Seven years ago JN-T succeeded, in the minds of many, in bringing the programme up from a low level of over-humorous, under-quality stories and injecting life back in to it. Now, this man is putting back into the programme everything that was wrong with it !! And what he's doing is far less forgivable than anything Graham Williams did.

Graham Williams still wanted to make DOCTOR WHO the quality programme it had always been but due to many unfortunate circumstances he didn't succeed (in my opinion at least). I don't think he ever intended to turn the programme into a laughable (laughable not in a humorous way but rather in the sense of "Plan 9 From Outer Space"), shoddy, uninspiring mess. Not only that, he had the sense to leave before the damage became irreversible.

What JN-T is doing, however, is dirrerent. He knows exactly what he is doing, yet doesn't care. He knows that extensive humour is the thing that DOCTOR WHO needs the very least ! My conclusion ? It's only a theory but isn't it possible that JN-T is trying to kill the show once and for all ? He knows that the day when he's forced to leave will inevitably come. Perhaps his attitude is "If I can't be the producer, no one will"? Does he want to go down in history as the last DOCTOR WHO producer ? Or am I just paranoid ?

A final note concerning what Sylvester had to say. He said nothing about wanting to inject extensive humour into the role. He simply wants to be the best Doctor that he can be. However, we all know that is very unlikely as JN-T will have sat him down and told him to be (over)humorous. If his performance is over-comical, blame the producer, not the actor.

SECOND IMAGE

WILLIAM SILVER, Erdington, B'HAM

I noticed that the late Patrick Troughton was mentioned a lot by Sylvester McCoy on Open Air who appeared to give the impression that he would, for a while at least, be unable to shake off the shadow of the Second Doctor. The real problem with the programme today, as I see it, is the reliance on bizarre and comical supporting characters. The Kangs made me cringe as did Richard Brier's character looking like a Batman reject. Then there is Tilda and Tabby (an intergalactic Hinge & Bracket?), Hugh Lloyd and Doddy of course all yet to come. Even the Rani got in on the "Who do you dos"!

A comic Doctor works, as the late Mr. Troughton proved emphatically, but when a comic doctor must interact with comical characters eager for laughs then we're in trouble. Less of the Tildas and Tabbys—more of the Sharaz Jeks!

DON'T TAKE SLY SERIOUSLY

BILL EDMUNDS, Newhampshire, USA

In my opinion #47 was the best DWB to come out since the 1987 Winter / Spring Special. One thing, however, I feel needs

THE PYRAMIDS OF MARS: PART 6 OF ANDREW SZABO'S SPECIAL ADAPTION

SUTEKH!! ANOTHER PRESENCE HAS BEEN DETECTED!!
YOU MEAN THE DOCTOR?
WHAT IS HE? WHAT IS HE?!
INSIDE THE HUT...
THE DOCTOR CATCHES THE BOX BY A SPLIT SECOND!
AAAGH!
THIS WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, DOCTOR?
SWEATY GELIGNITE IS HIGHLY UNSTABLE!
AVOIDING THE MUMMIES, THE DOCTOR HIDES THE GELIGNITE IN ONE OF THE OUTHOUSES...
SORRY...
YOU'VE GOT NO FUSE, NO DETONATOR.. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO EXPLODE IT?
I DON'T KNOW YET!
BACK AT THE LODGE...
WELLDONE, SCARMAN!
OHH!
THERE ARE MARKS THIS TIME IM AFRAID. IT LOOKS AS IF HIS LATE BROTHER PAID A CALL. TYPICAL OSIRAN SIMPLICITY!
OH, DOCTOR! SOMETIMES I DON'T THINK YOU'RE...
HUMAN?
A MAN HAS JUST BEEN MURDERED!
WARHEAD TRIGGER CHARGE—PHASE ONE...THIS MUST BE PLACED DIRECTLY BENEATH THE DETONATOR!
FOUR MEN, SARAH—FIVE IF WE INCLUDE SCARMAN. JUST THE FIRST OF MILLIONS IF SUTEKH ISN'T STOPPED KNOW THINE ENEMY... ADMIRABLE ADVICE!
MEANWHILE THE DOCTOR HAS A PLAN OF HIS OWN!
THAT'LL HAVE TO DO DOCTOR!
AN IMPREGNABLE DISGUISE WOULDN'T YOU SAY? HURRY! DON'T FORGET THE GUN!
AT THAT MOMENT...
THESE ARE THE CO-ORDINATES TO THE PYRAMID OF MARS I RELEASE THEM TO YOU!
ENGAGE THE CO-ORDINATES IN THE PROJECTION DOME MONITER...
IMMEDIATELY, MASTER!

clearing up. McCoy's statement on page 5 about British fans is misleading. Having met and seen Sylvester twice, I can tell you that he is a VERY comical man who delights in "kidding around". As such many of the things he says aren't meant to be taken literally. Also, considering what he must have been told about British fans from his present employer, who can blame him for shying away from PanoptiCon?

RETURN OF THE "REAL" DOCTOR

S.LANCASTER, Stoke-on-Trent, STAFFS

Though I must admit you have a good record with verifiable facts, it was disappointing to see that you had predictably sacrificed prudence for controversy by including the "Who's Ignoring Who?" item in #47 reporting Sylvester McCoy's alleged comments about British fans. Whether it was said or not, I have to conclude that it would be a justifiable comment. As far as most contributors to DWB were concerned he would be justified in feeling positively snubbed. The first comment in the returning issue implicitly criticised him for (shock! Horror!) talking to JN-T! After that readers' letters ranged from the naively uninformed about lack of acting experience, to the ignorant and grossly insulting like the suggestion that he was only offered the job because he was desperate for work and so could be easily manipulated !?!? Revealingly, the few letters welcoming him as an encouraging and inspired choice all came from those who had actually seen him at work.

For myself, by 8 00pm on 7th September, I felt that the event I had been waiting for for more than half a decade had happened—the REAL Doctor is back on television!

MASSACRED !

STEPHEN BELL, Eltham, YORKSHIRE

As a regular viewer of DOCTOR WHO since it began, I have found the last couple of years in the history of the series very frustrating. JN-T is not, in my opinion, the worst thing ever to have happened to the programme, but with the casting of Colin Baker and the transformation of the Doctor into—as one fan at PanoptiCon 8 put it—"Doctor Hooligan, the Cosmic Rambo", I was convinced that something had gone radically wrong. TRIAL was meant to be a revamp but merely confirmed that a revamp was still needed. Sad as it was for Colin Baker, a new Doctor was certainly called for. JN-T, however, unexpectedly stayed on and announced yet again that the new season would have more humour. Why MORE humour, for heaven's sake ? DOCTOR WHO is—or supposed to be—a drama series. I am not saying that drama should be humourless, but humour should arise out of occasional light relief and not be a dominant factor. So it was with a mixture of hope and trepidation that I watched the first episode of TIME AND THE RANI.

The new opening graphics were good, but I felt a twinge of unease when the face of the new Doctor winked at the viewers. That denoted an air of flippancy which we can well do without. As the episode progressed I grew appalled and dismayed at this juvenile claptrap disguising the possibility of a good story idea. The Rani was up to something intriguing, but I didn't much care—all I could see was the series I have devotedly been following for 24 years being massacred before my eyes.

The following weekend I attended PanoptiCon 8 where I saw EVIL OF THE DALEKS episode two again for the first time in 19 years. I'd forgotten how good it was. The atmosphere in the hall was electric, and the episode got a rapturous round of applause as did Victor Pemberton when he said, "That's how it should be done now." How very true.

This is not to say that DOCTOR WHO must not move with the times or that it should go back to being made in black and white. It simply means that it should be treated as serious drama, not as light entertainment. I can see in Sylvester McCoy the potential to be a very good Doctor, provided the style and content of the programme are completely overhauled. There would appear to be only one avenue by which this can be achieved, but it remains steadfastly closed...

MEANWHILE...
DON'T WORRY, I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING...
MAKE SURE YOU SHOOT STRAIGHT—YOU WON'T GET A SECOND CHANCE!
SARAH WATCHES AS THE DOCTOR PLACES THE GELIGNITE IN THE MISSILE
SUDDENLY...
STOP! IS YOUR RELAY DAMAGED? THIS IS TO BE PLACED IN THE PROJECTION DOME MONITER...
THE DOCTOR HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO OBEY, AND SARAH LEVELS HER SHOTGUN...
INCREDIBLY, THE EXOTHERMIC REACTION OF THE GUNSHOT IS HELD IN STASIS!
BUT I HIT IT! I KNOW! I HIT IT!
SUTEKH HAS CONTAINED IT!
HOW?
THROUGH MENTAL POWER.. I'VE GOT TO GET TO HIM AND BREAK HIS CONCENTRATION!
ON THE MISSILE... LOADING RAMP—A... CRUDE DETONATION DEVICE...IT MUST BE.... REMOVED!
THE DOCTOR ENTERS THE ROOM UNSEEN!
WHILE SCARMAN ATTENDS TO THE DEVICE, THE DOCTOR ACTIVATES THE SPACE-TIME TUNNEL...
ANOTHER ATTEMPT BY THE HUMANS TO PREVENT YOUR RETURN! THEY WILL BE HUNTED AND PUNISHED!
I CANNOT HOLD... BACK THE EXOTHERMIC REACTION FOR MANY... MINUTES...IT IS TAKING... AN IMMENSE TOOL OF... AVAILABLE ENERGY!
ALL SUTEKH'S WILL IS BEING CHANNELLED TO THE MISSILE, PREVENTING IT'S EXPLOSION!
...AND GOES TO FACE HIS MOST POWERFUL ADVERSARY EVER!
THAT DEVICE ON THE RAMP... REMOVE IT!

MONEY FOR NOTHING

JOHN RICHARDS, LONDON E8

I've only recently discovered DWB and it's been a real eye-opener, particularly in comparison with the ailing and inadequate Marvel DWM. Several of their recent issues have been a complete waste of paper for such a high price and your revelations about the interview(s) that never were don't surprise me. Fortunately DWB continues to excel and it seems wrong that the DWM writers make money out of such thin rubbish whilst DWB goes from strength to strength with no financial rewards.

PLAGIARISED AGAIN ?

DOMINIC BRITTON, SHEFFIELD

A point of interest which I thought I might bring to your attention. I recently read the DWM autumn special—which incidentally is, in my opinion, quite appalling—and noted that in their 'Design Checklist' the costume designers for THE DEADLY ASSASSIN are named as "Jim Acheson and Joan Ellacott". Elsewhere in the catalogue the former is referred to as James Acheson. Upon glancing at your An Unearthly...Revelation in DWB#29/30 (published almost two years before this Marvel special) I discovered that the same abbreviation occurs in exactly the same place in your list. Coincidence, eh ?

MARVEL "RIP-OFF"

JONATHAN BURT, Oxshott, SURREY

I was shocked to read about DWM sending you a £57 invoice for using that tatty Joan Simms pic. The mag itself gets worse and as for the Autumn Special—£1 95!!—who's trying to rip-off the fans?! One can only hope they begin to heed your criticisms (they don't take any notice of readers' letters; I've tried).

CONT'D PAGE 12...

BARRY LETTS & TERRANCE DICKS

WHAT WERE YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREERS BEFORE YOU JOINED 'DOCTOR WHO'?

BL: I was an actor for 20 years and about 12 of those were spent in television in which I also started writing for and then I decided I wanted to direct. I'd been directing for about three years when I was asked if I'd like to take over as producer of DOCTOR WHO.

TD: I studied English at University and then I worked in advertising for about five years as a copywriter. I then became a radio and then a televison scriptwriter and eventually I got offered the job on DOCTOR WHO which was my beginning in script editing and working for the BBC rather than being a freelance.

WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE UNIT / EARTH-SET FRAMEWORK ?

TD: That was more in my time and was an economy measure. WHO has always been short of money and they were finding it harder and harder to create a convincing alien planet. Now, if you set your stories on Earth you have several advantages in that you can use contemporary settings. You can take your cameras outside and shoot London or the countryside or wherever it is set whereas if you're doing hardcore science fiction, or the kind where you're going to other worlds, everything that's made — everything you see — has got to be built from scratch. So it was worked out during Patrick Troughton's final season — as a production decision rather than a creative one — that the only way we could do a good season next year would be to set the stories on Earth, and that's why the Doctor was exiled to Earth at the end of THE WAR GAMES and UNIT was created to give him a loose base...

BL: ...And that decision was taken by Peter Bryant and Derrick Sherwin who were our predecessors. Derrick was a sort of associate producer towards the end, but basically he was script-editor and Terrance took over from him. So they took that decision and we inherited it for the first season and it worked very well.

TD: It gives you production advantages but it's also true you are stuck with very much the same kind of story. Malcolm Hulke said "Well, you've got two types of story — mad Earth scientist or alien invasion from space!", and if you think about it that's more or less true, and so we had to work out variants on that. So over the next few years we gradually started breaking away from that formula by having the Doctor get away more and more, and meanwhile Barry was cunningly pushing up the budget because the two mediums worked and got better results and figures and a better prestige and so we were able to say "Well, if you want shows as good as this you've got to pay for it"! So eventually we reversed that decision, but over a period of 2 or 3 years.

BL: My prime boast is that when I took over DOCTOR WHO it was a very cheap show and when I left after five years it was an expensive one !

WHY WAS YOUR FIRST SEASON ONLY 25 EPISODES COMPARED TO THE 40 OR SO AVERAGE OF THE '60s ?

BL: That was a creative decision and whether I had anything to do with it or not I don't know. Patrick Troughton was an old friend of mine and when I directed him in THE ENEMY OF THE WORLD when Innes Lloyd was the producer he was being asked to sign another year's contract and he wasn't sure whether he wanted to do it or not because he'd been doing it for a couple of years and he said to me, "This schedule is really killing, doing one a week, and I've been offered another year. What do you reckon ?" So I said why don't say to them yes, you'd do it on condition it wasn't 40 shows a year, but instead a six months season with the shooting of it spread over 10 months. Whether he did feed that idea into Innes or not I don't know, but the decision to do that was taken but it only happened when Jon Pertwee took over, so Patrick signed up and went on doing another 40 a year, and when Jon Pertwee signed it went onto the 26 a year. But it was a creative decision to give us all room to move. To do 40 a year is an enormous operation...

TD: ...A great strain on the writers and impossibly punishing on the actors. It was a decision to do less shows but of a much higher quality.

WHICH STORIES THIS SEASON DID YOU INHERIT FROM DERRICK SHERWIN?

BL: SPEARHEAD FROM SPACE was already shot when I took over and THE SILURIANS was in the process of shooting. They were out doing exterior filming and then the studio started. AMBASSADORS OF DEATH immediately after that was already commissioned but we commissioned INFERNO which was the logical extension of the type of season that we inherited (i.e. we were going along with the same sort of idea with UNIT very much involved and based on Earth). What we'd inherited were three shows that season all 7 episodes long and that was much too long. By the time you got to episode 5 the story really needed to come to an end and you still had 2 episodes to go, and one had the utmost difficulty in keeping the momentum going. So we made an absolute decision that we'd never have another one longer than 6 episodes and preferably keeping down to 4. We would have liked to have done what John does now and have mostly 4 episode serials...

TD: ...And again that was partly economics because long shows are cheaper than short shows. Per episode it's much cheaper to do an 8 episode show than two 4s because you have one set of sets and one set of costumes which have twice the life. It was all economy — the answer to most questions about television always come down to money. Again it was a matter of pushing up the budget and pushing up the quality that we did more and more shorter shows. We were lucky that Ronnie Marsh, who was Head of our department then, was a great WHO fan and supported us a lot. He liked what he called "The first night" and the more first nights a season — in other words the more new stories you could give him — the better. I think it's a shame in a way that they only seem to do 4-parters now because there's a place for the good 6-parter — 4 and 6 is ideal, 5's not bad and that's really a trimmed down 6 with the slow bits cut out.

DID YOU DECIDE ON A DEFINITE DIRECTION FOR THE SHOW TO TAKE ?

BL: While we were planning the second season we were trying to work out a rationale of what WHO was all about, what time travel was all about. At one time we thought we should sit down and write a private 'Things to come'; a history of the Universe from now on in so that we could have coherent stories which fitted into an overall B16 plan, but that was going too far. What we did work out were all sorts of things about time paradoxes and what makes sense and what doesn't make sense which were largely ignored by some subsequent producers and script editors with the result that you got literally impossible things happening. One of the things we made up our minds about and was strongly influenced by the UNIT set-up on Earth was that whereas before it had teetered on the bridge between science fiction / science fantasy, we said "No, it's definitely science fiction, not science fantasy", in other words we can't invent scientific principles to suit our stories. If we have something which is apparently magic or occult, like THE DÆMONS, then it's got to have an underlying scientific explanation. One of the things that did nail the style of the show to a flagship of realism, of naturalism, was we tried to make it as real as possible given that we were doing a science fiction story. We would never allow stylisation, the sending-up, the mocking of the science fiction convention. It had to be taken seriously and that's one of the reasons it's always been popular with grown-ups and why it moved away from being a children's show that a lot of adults liked into being a universal show which both children and adults could like equally.

TD: Another thing we found out, through trial and experience, was that it's no good sitting back and saying to the world of writers at large "Okay, we want some stories for DOCTOR WHO, what are your ideas ?", because you then get in 100 ideas all of which are unusable for various reasons that the writers couldn't know about, for example they're not the kind of thing you're doing, or you couldn't afford it, or you did a similar thing last season... What we evolved to do was a great deal of input from the top. There would come a stage when we would sit down and discuss the forthcoming season and we'd say "We've got to have five stories, now we want a story of this kind and a story of that kind... who would be the best people to write them ?" We would even think up a general outline of the sort of story we wanted, for example THE TIME WARRIOR is an example where we thought it's a long time since we've done an historical story so let's do a historical story again but have an alien science input into it; a story about an alien spaceship that crashes in our past and tries to influence it. So all of that came from us and we took it to Robert Holmes and then we discussed it between us. We did that with the stories and equally when the Doctor needed a new companion we would sit down and work out what kind of person she should be.

BL: We inherited the Liz Shaw character and I want to make it quite clear that we didn't drop her because Carrie John wasn't a good actress, on the contrary she's worked with me more recently in The Hound of the Baskervilles', she's a very good actress. But we found that this character, who was very much a scientist in her own right and a clever one, a bit abrasive, was an encumbrance in the stories because she never had to ask the Doctor what was going on because she was clever enough to know and so they could have conversations about the situations which the audience wouldn't have understood, and what we decided during that first season was that we needed a character who knew enough about science to be able to understand what the Doctor was talking about but was fundamentally ignorant so that she could say "What's going on Doctor ?" and the Doctor could explain and at the same time explain to the audience, and also for the younger viewers to be able to identify with whereas it would be very difficult to identify with a clever doctor of philosophy...

TD: ...So that was Katy, completely different, much younger. From a professional point of view it's a thankless task being a companion because WHO is the Doctor's show. He dominates it, he gets the best lines, the best scenes, and there's always a certain amount of where the companion is treading water and Carrie John was very good in a strong dramatic scene but she got very fed up if she didn't have much to do. Well Jo (Katy Manning) had such charm and ebullience that she could chunter through a fairly light scene where she wasn't doing or saying very much and carry it on simple likeability and personality.

BL: We felt that one of the difficulties with the Jo Grant character was that she was a little *too* helpless. We needed somebody who was able to initiate action, so that's when we worked out that if she is an investigative journalist and the sort of person who's a bit of a women's libber but still ignorant of science, we've got the best of both worlds.

TD: Sarah was a strong character in her own right, not a scientist but somebody who wouldn't necessarily always agree with the Doctor. She never was formally his assistant, they just got involved and that was a response to the growing world of women's lib — the traditional world role of the female companion in DOCTOR WHO is to scream and be rescued by the Doctor and to tell the Doctor how wonderful he is and it was becoming increasingly evident that we weren't going to get away with that for much longer, so the female companions — and it's gone on since — have become much stronger and much more independent.

HOW DID 'THE MASTER' COME ABOUT ?

TD: Again that was one of those shape of the season decisions.

BL: It's very difficult for Terrance and me to disentangle precisely who had what idea when, but we can pin-point this pretty well. We were talking and one of us said "Well, what's needed is for the Doctor to have a running opponent"...

TD: ...Someone had said the Doctor is rather like Sherlock Holmes in lots of ways and what we need is a Moriarty, an equal.

BL: As we discussed this Terrance was shaping and working out the stories for the eighth season and we said "Yes, what a good idea", and I said "And I know exactly the person to play him, Roger Delgado", because I'd worked with Roger over the years and I knew he'd be perfect. So it was thought of and cast within 2 minutes and the next day Terrance came in and said "I've thought of exactly the right name for this new character, 'The Master'".

TD: Like the Doctor, it's a title...

BL: ...And it's got certain academic connotations like Master of Arts. In fact I said perhaps we ought to have a sub-villain called 'The Batchelor'!

TD: And it's the name that an egotist would choose. It was always nice when Roger said "I am usually referred to as The Master."

BL: So it all happened in two days flat — just went click, click click. We did make, I think, a slight mistake in so far as we were so excited about this idea that we wrote The Master into every story of the season...

TD: ...And that is comparable to the thing on Earth which is good for one or two stories but if you've got to have a supervillain in every story the question arises that if they're so smart how come The Master never kills the Doctor and how come the Doctor never catches The Master ? And every season it got too much so we then held him back...

BL: ...And also it seemed a bit daft that every story there's this extraordinary thing happening, I wonder what's behind it, and every time it turned out it was The Master. It became slightly ludicrous...

TD: ...So if you'd done two non-Master stories you could then slip him in at a later stage. It was always a great moment when he appeared, like in COLONY IN SPACE, and there's a scene on the alien planet where this great Official is going to come from Earth and sort everything out, so you've got this build-up to this character who's this very important man from Earth and then when he arrives it's The Master ! That's a great moment which you could use in a way you weren't expecting it. He then became an intermittent villain.

DURING YOUR TIME YOU TRIMMED THE COMPANIONS DOWN TO ONE GIRL AT A TIME. WHY WAS THIS ?

TD: From my point of view as a writer or script editor it's practicalities of scripting. If you get a lot of people you get a lot of poeple standing around in a scene and it gets harder and harder to find something for them all to do and say. You would read a scene and realise that 'Fred's' been standing in the corner for two minutes and he hasn't had a word and when he does get a word in he says "My word, that's fascinating Doctor"! So we found the fewer the better with companions. I'd always be happy with one, two is the maximum absolutely, and if you get the Tardis like a no.9 bus you're in trouble !

BL: One of the things we discussed and tried to bring into the stories in general, especially in the early episodes of any story, was the very firm establishment of the other characters in the story as real people. The big danger in science fiction is that you get so intrigued by the clever scientific idea that

you get an interesting plot peopled by cardboard characters. We didn't want that so very often our first episode had very little science fiction in it, just enough to say "My God, what's happening ?", and there'd be quite a lot of non-science fiction and instead a lot of interaction between people and establishing their relationships.

HOW DIFFICULT WAS IT TO GET 'FRONTIER IN SPACE' AND 'PLANET OF THE DALEKS' TO DOVETAIL ?
TD: The Daleks are analogous to The Master in the sense that they are very popular and very effective. They struck gold with the Daleks in the early days of the serial. The country went crazy on Daleks and if you look at the early seasons you will find a very high incidence of Dalek stories. I think when ever they got stuck they said "Let's have the Daleks again", and of course not unnaturally they ran them into the ground. So you got to the danger of people saying "Oh my God, not those bloody Daleks again"! It was an asset which, like The Master, you had to use carefully, and every now and again when we thought it was a reasonable time we would bring the Daleks back again. The first time we brought them back was in Louis Marks' story, DAY OF THE DALEKS, and then we rested them for a while and it was always pre-envisaged that they would trail at the end of one story in which something portentous was going to happen and the Daleks were behind everything and would be the opponents in the next story.

WHAT ELEMENTS DID YOU LOOK FOR WHEN CREATING A STORY CONCEPT ? WAS THERE A SET FORMULA THAT YOU ADHERED TO ?
BL: It varied with the type of story. My personal favourite type of story was one where you had part of it very ordinary and very straightforward set on Earth and partly fantastic; either on another planet or going into the past or giant maggots, so that you've got the contrast between the two. Ones that were completely set on another planet and everything was alien were perfectly good stories but they weren't my personal favourites. It really depended on the type of story and what we tried to do was to get as wide a variety in each season as possible — one UNIT story, one space opera, one time-traveller...
TD: Variety was always the keynote. The common thing we used to look for was mileage, in other words WHO always moved very fast, it's an action show, it's not a show in which people can stand around discussing the meaning of life, the universe and everything for very long periods — they're always on the move and things have got to happen quickly. You had to have a story that will give you mileage and that was always one of my key worries: Will this story go to 6 episodes, will it go to 4 ?? Are we going to get a sag in episode 4 where they're all marking time and nothing is actually happening ? So that will be the common denominator; a strong enough plot or often a series of plots so you get two strong interweaving plots to keep the show moving. There had to be a solidity of material — lots of writers would send in ideas which we would have run through in one and a half episodes, and with especially a 6-parter you are dealing with nearly 3 hours of television time which is like a super-epic film. You get through an awful lot of stuff in that, especially in a fast-moving show...
BL: ...And you can easily, if you're not careful, end up in episode 4 when, at the end of the episode, our heroes are in exactly the same position they were in at the beginning and all they've done inbetween is chase round corridors saying "Look out — there's a monster coming", and that's bad plotting. Occasionally we found ourselves almost in that position but usually we managed to escape when we realised the danger and then we were at great pains to make sure it didn't happen. Occasionally we would have a story which was fine but obviously wouldn't go the length of 6 episodes so what you had to do was to introduce a new element about two thirds of the way through to revive it, a new complication. One example — in the days when we were doing 7-parters — was INFERNO which was about drilling through Earth's crust and the stuff that comes up that turns people into monsters. Although that was a good straightforward science fiction story we felt it wouldn't sustain 7 episodes, which was a colossal number, so we came up with this whole alternative world thing in which the Doctor goes into another world where things don't work out and then he comes back to Earth and saves it. We felt it needed that — it was also a lot of fun for them all to play those other characters !

HOW DID 'THE THREE DOCTORS' COME ABOUT ?
BL: Nobody could say that it was our idea because right from the start people all the time used to come up to us and say "I've got a great idea, why don't you get all three Doctors together?" Fans used to write in, people in the BBC Club, writers would come in all excited... and we'd say "Yes, yes, lovely idea", and then one day when we were discussing the 10th Season...
TD: ...We said we must hit them with something for the opening show — The Master coming back or the Daleks coming back... We sat around racking our brains and this ridiculous idea about three Doctors came back. Could we do it ? Would Billy Hartnell do it ? Would Patrick do it ? Could we make it work ? And it all came about through that.
DID YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE GETTING WILLIAM HARTNELL AND PATRICK TROUGHTON BACK INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES ?
BL: Patrick said yes straight away and indeed so did Bill Hartnell, but the trouble was that Billy was very ill. I phoned him and spoke to him and he said "Oh yes, oh what a lovely idea, great."
TD: So we said fine, he's going to do it, and we got the scripts in. We got all the scripts written with the first Doctor playing a very active part, running through the whole thing...
BL: ...And then his wife Heather rang up and said "Oh dear, look, you obviously don't realise Bill thinks that he is going to get better and will come back as a full-time actor, but he is not going to, he is a very ill man." So we met her and talked to her and said "Well, what can we do ?", and she said, "Well, really nothing very much, he just wouldn't be able to remember those lines." So what we did is what you see on the screen...
TD: ...We hurriedly rewrote all the scripts so that the first Doctor appears only on the monitor screen ...
BL: That's right, all his stuff was pre-filmed at Ealing Studios which is the television film studio attached to the BBC. We just set up a camera, he sat in a chair and read his lines off a big board and we did it in one day. We also did some publicity photographs with him and Pat and Jon and that's all he did. Those shots which had been pre-planned were put onto the monitors so that he appeared on the Tardis scanner talking to them below and the actors had to talk back to the already filmed image so he wasn't in the studio at all. He loved being DOCTOR WHO and he loved acting and it wasn't very long after that that he sadly died. He became a lot more ill at first — he had hardening of the arteries which affected his brain so he couldn't have done anything more, but it was lovely that he was able to do that as a sort of final signing-off.
TD: In creative terms it worked very well because he had this very exalted God-like status where he would suddenly appear and say a few incisive words and calm them all down which worked quite well for the story, and Patrick and Jon carried the story between them and you had this very nice double-act that they did which worked very well.
WAS IT ALWAYS DECIDED THAT PERTWEE'S EXILE WOULD END WITH THIS STORY ?
TD: I think it was kind of built-in because each Earth invasion story was getting to be more and more of a contrivance and we wanted finally to come full circle and say "Okay, the exile is over, the Tardis is working again and WHO will go back to its old format...
BL: If you remember we had COLONY IN SPACE where he did get away from Earth. It was like an experiment to see what it was like to do a non-UNIT story and as a result of that we thought not only will life be much easier from a story point-of-view but it will be much better for the audience if we can have more variety, but the only way we can do that is to let him get over his banishment...
TD: ...And since the Omega thing was a great threat to the Time Lords, that made it a good occasion for him to have finally served his time and receive his pardon. That was all worked out.
HOW DID THE CONCEPT OF THE TIME LORDS COME ABOUT ?
TD: Before THE WAR GAMES they had never been heard of. It was known that he was a fugitive and kind of hinted that he was on the run and could never go back to his own world. It wasn't that this was all worked out from the beginning, he was just conceived as a fugitive, there was no back history. I think it was my predecessor, Derrick Sherwin, who funnily enough sort of invented them without knowing it. He said "Isn't he a member of some race called the Time Lords ?" I don't know where Derrick heard that — maybe somebody else had said it in the early days — but we came up with the idea of the Time Lords and then at the end of the Troughton era the decision had already been taken to do the UNIT stories so we wanted to get the Doctor on Earth, so the resolution of THE WAR GAMES was always going to be that in order to solve that particular problem the Doctor had to contact his own people again even though he knew it meant his own capture, and we knew by then that Patrick was going and that we were recasting with Jon, so the whole thing dove-tailed together; the going back to Earth, the change of Doctor... So to gell all that together we brought in a little bit about the Time Lords who then tended to pop up later on and dispatch the Doctor on missions or give him a few words of advice, and then Robert Holmes revealed more about them in much greater detail in THE DEADLY ASSASSIN. Things evolve on WHO — they're not worked out according to some great master plan — the show has a life of its own, it develops, it mutates...
BL: ...You see, if you actually saw four Time Lord stories together, one after the other, you'd find quite a lot of discrepancies of explanations of what the Time Lords are doing and why; sometimes they've been quite clearly goodies, guardians of the stability of the time / space continuum; other times there's been a certain element of maybe they're not so benevolent as they seem...
TD: ...Which is interesting. You can feel that as you get to know more about them there's more going on beneath the surface — they're not straightforward angel figures.

WHAT WERE YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE LEVEL OF HORROR AND VIOLENCE YOU WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT IN YOUR STORIES ?
TD: I think WHO is never really that frightening. We did some pretty scarey stuff and it got more scarey after we left, but we were always very aware of treading a line. Remember we had a shot of somebody's face collapsing in a mask as though it was sucked so that you saw his face collapse inwards, and it was horrifying. The special effects people were very proud of it and Barry saw it and said "Yes, yes, very good — take it out or cut it down to a very quick flash"...
BL: ... That's right, have a two-second shot of it.
TD: It really was terrifying stuff, we would always be aware.
BL: Funnily enough, the one we ran into most trouble with was the second Auton story, TERROR OF THE AUTONS, and that was the one where things made of plastic came to life and everybody said was too terrifying for words. If you remember there was this plastic doll that when it got warm it came to life and strangled people and people were writing in and saying "Since your show's gone out my son won't take his teddy bear to bed with him in case it comes to life and strangles him"! Also the scene where the Doctor says to a policeman, "May I see your warrant card", and then leans forward and peels his face off and there's just a blank Auton — nothing — underneath. We had a letter from Scotland Yard, the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police, saying "This is not improving our image frightening the little children with policemen", but they were very nice about it and they said "We do understand your eagerness to make exciting shows but you aren't thinking of doing it again, are you ?"! And somebody wrote a big leading article in The Daily Express, 'WHY MY CHILD WILL NOT BE WATCHING DOCTOR WHO IN FUTURE'!...
TD: ..."DOCTOR WHO's Teatime Horror Show" it said, and there was a little campaign and questions in Parliament...
BL: ...And for a little while our big boss Huw Wheldon — who was the Managing Director of the BBC and a great DOCTOR WHO fan who used to say that the only two programmes that his family had to see were DOCTOR WHO and Match of the Day — for a while was quietly looking at all our output to make sure we didn't do it again ! We had to pull our horns in a bit and although I can understand why they did it with THE DÆMONS and those other two, I think it was over-reacting...
TD: ...It's like France which has never taken DOCTOR WHO(sic) at all — they won't touch it — the whole series as far as they're concerned is too frightening and that goes for most of Europe. We only really sell in the English-speaking countries although it's a show that could be very popular I'm sure. They take lots of other programmes, but French television withdrew their hands in horror — they won't touch it !

WHICH STORIES DID YOU COMMISSION FOR TOM BAKER BEFORE YOU LEFT ?
BL: ROBOT which Terrance wrote, the 2-parter about the Sontaran chap and GENESIS OF THE DALEKS. This happened in the interim period right at the beginning of Philip Hinchcliffe coming into it. What happened was Bob Holmes and I had asked Terry Nation to write a Dalek story and he came in with a story idea and I said, "Terry, it's a very good story but you've already sold it to us three times already"! He said "What ?" I said, "Really, if we're going to have the Daleks; nobody really knows where the Daleks come from, why don't you do one which shows the genesis of the Daleks ? "Oh great" he said, and went away and worked it out and just about that period I left and Philip took over, so though I was in on the conception of that, Philip took it over and developed it from there on. The one about the pyramids of Mars had been commissioned but was in the very early stages. I think the first draft script had arrived before I left but it took quite a considerable time before they actually got it onto the screen so I had nothing to do with it from the moment the scripts arrived. REVENGE OF THE CYBERMEN I don't think I had anything to do with as far as I remember but I was very much involved with THE ARK IN SPACE in which they came back to the same place in a different time because we were desperately trying to find a way of saving some money and thought "Well, if we have two spaceship stories and get an exiguous link between the two of them then we'll be able to use the same sets", which we did. And that's just about the most recent memory of our partnership together on DOCTOR WHO before we decided that enough was enough and we both moved on to the Sunday afternoon Classics series.

TERRANCE DICKS AND BARRY LETTS, THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Interview conducted and transcribed by Pat Fenech. A complete version of this interview will appear in a future Zerinza special on the Pertwee years which will be available through DWB

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1963

I am attempting to launch a new fanzine entitled "1963", which will be written as though it is the year of 1963. I am looking for contributions which have to be written / drawn "in the year of 1963"!

As only 6 episodes will have been seen, articles can cover speculation about the future of the series in 1964, events and trends of the year 1963, any sci-fi prior to 1963 and fictional adventures of the 1st Doctor. (The Doctor of this time was an enigma which must be reflected)

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TIME TO TAKE ACTION

SID SMITH, Wallsend, TYNE AND WEAR

Is it really too much to ask that we have a programme that is put together with conviction ? Or that we could have a production team who care about achieving *quality* (or even competent) standards and performances ? As I write I can think of no other story in DOCTOR WHO's history that sinks as low as PARADISE TOWERS ! ! Watching Richard Briers, especially in the final episode, was a humiliating experience I would not care to go through again. And what have we to look forward to ? The announcement that "Next week DOCTOR WHO meets Ken Dodd"! Surely this policy of casting "celebrities" only compounds and worsens the many problems, not least that of credibility, DOCTOR WHO faces.

If proof was needed that DOCTOR WHO has finally run its course under JN-T, then PARADISE TOWERS must have supplied it. The time has come to take action...

JN-T STORIES INFERIOR STATESIDE TOO

MICHAEL LEE, Minnetonka, U S A

I find it very surprising that JN-T could believe his "memory cheats" comment (Open Air). Why is it that, besides the English fans—who have been disgusted with JN-T for almost three years—the American fans have been starting to go in that direction as well ? His feelings that the classics are over-rated can not be true when the Tom Baker episodes (which are run alongside current DOCTOR WHO here) are considered *far* superior to JN-T's "DOCTOR WHO's Romp Through the Universe", and the only one of his that is considered as good is CAVES OF ANDROZANI ?? JN-T is over here often enough at conventions that he should know that the Americans aren't happy with him lately either.

I hope Sylvester gets to a British con—I met him this summer and he is very nice and friendly, but then so was Colin and look what happened to him...

INFLUENCE OVERESTIMATED

TREVOR LAMBERT, Doncaster, S.YORKS

I thought your gripes about Open Air were a bit silly. I mean, the BBC don't over protect any other show so why start with DOCTOR WHO ? If you think JN-T ordered a set-up then you overestimate his influence. I expect the main reason why criticisms against him personally didn't make the screen is because the vast majority of Open Air viewers don't know or care who he is. They want to see celebrities—not producers.

WHERE DID THE DECLINE BEGIN ?

JONATHAN BURT, Oxshott, SURREY

I realised Open Air had staged a cover-up on my first viewing of the pointless, sycophantic rubbish and I wouldn't be at all surprise if JN-T was responsible since his mammoth ego is legendary in the BBC. As to the rest of DWB#48, I would be similarly surprised if he really does care as Colin Baker so valliantly stipulated about the current state of the programme. It seems to me that he is simply clinging on to the series for mercenary reasons and implementing a series of insane and twisted reforms to make DOCTOR WHO a kids' sit-com / pantomime with no relevance to the first 21 years to attempt to appeal to a new sector of the market. The man must leave before his incalculable damage becomes irreversable.

It is interesting to speculate on when this mad desire and puerile refusal of decent, rational advice first gripped him. On the whole it appears that the programme was seriously produced up to Davison's last year. If it was in 1983 / 84 that he started to whip up his lust for the circus, then this might explain why, firstly, Davison left and also why he seemed so happy in Australia (see DWB#48)—because he had already decided to leave JN-T's Panto Show! It might be that Davison had some control over his inane producer limiting the amount of garbage we now get. Possibly the strain got too much for Peter, or perhaps he simply got bored or fed up with JN-T's prententious moods so he felt he had to depart before JN-T's crass stupidity got out of control. The standard 'typecast' excuse covered Davison's and, more unfortunately, JN-T's tracks, and it wasn't long before JN-T acquired a new and impressionable Doctor in Colin Baker and, lo and behold, exerted his full control with Colin's very first story; THE TWIN DILEMMA! Saward was also obviously involved in some kind of a struggle with N-T and I must say that although he was a rubbish script editor he did well to manage so many decent stories under him with only the occasional abortion. Without Davison Eric Saward was left only with mounting frustration as Colin Baker pandered to N-T and in the end, of course, he blew and quit!

JN-T'S BLUFF

PAUL DUMONT

Thanks for printing, and editing so well, my unstructured, rambling impressions of TIME AND THE RANI. Having now seen the first 8 episodes—and with JN-T seemingly secure to produce Season 25—my rosy vision of the future has faded, my optimism shaken to pieces by the farrago of PARADISE TOWERS. JN-T might bluff that a lot of TV shows have 14 episodes or less, but how many are drama serials of only 25 minutes duration and how many of those have been truncated down from 26 episodes per year? Star Cops—managing to pull even lower ratings—received more airtime than WHO!

The idea of a SEVEN DOCTORS story is ridiculous. The best way to celebrate the 25th Anniversary would be with a new producer !! (I suppose the chance of that happening is a lot less than THE SEVEN DOCTORS)...

HAS JN-T FINALLY REACHED HIS NADIR ?

DAVID CARLILE, LONDON SW17

DOCTOR WHO used to have stories with plots (remember those days ?). Is it too much to hope that Nathan-Turner has finally reached his nadir ?!?

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THIS MUST BE THE ENTRANCE TO SUTEKH'S TOMB!
SUTEKH'S CONCENTRATION IS BROKEN - AND THE PYRAMID MISSILE IS DESTROYED!
NOW SUTEKH IS CONDEMNED FOREVER TO STAY A PRISONER IN THE EYE OF HORUS. ALL HIS MALEVOLENCE IS DIRECTED AT THE DOCTOR!
BOOM!!!
IDENTIFY YOURSELF!
I CAN IF I WISH KEEP YOU ALIVE FOR CENTURIES RACKED BY THE MOST EXCRUCIATING PAIN!
AAAAH!!
DESTROY ME.. NOTHING ELSE REMAINS IN YOUR POWER...
AAAAHH!!
I DENTIFY YOURSELF PLAYTHING OF SUTEKH...
I... I'M A TRAVELLER FROM GALLIFREY IN THE CONSTELLATION OF KASTEROBOROUS
10-ZERO 11 ZERO, ZERO BY ZERO-3
IN TIME AND SPACE... ANSWER!
I KNOW THE PLANET, DATA RETRIEVAL.. SO! YOU ARE A TIME-LORD
I RENOUNCED MY OWN RACE.. I'M MERELY A TRAVELLER...
NAMES MEAN NOTHING! WHAT IS THE BINARY LOCATION FROM GALACTIC ZERO CENTRE?

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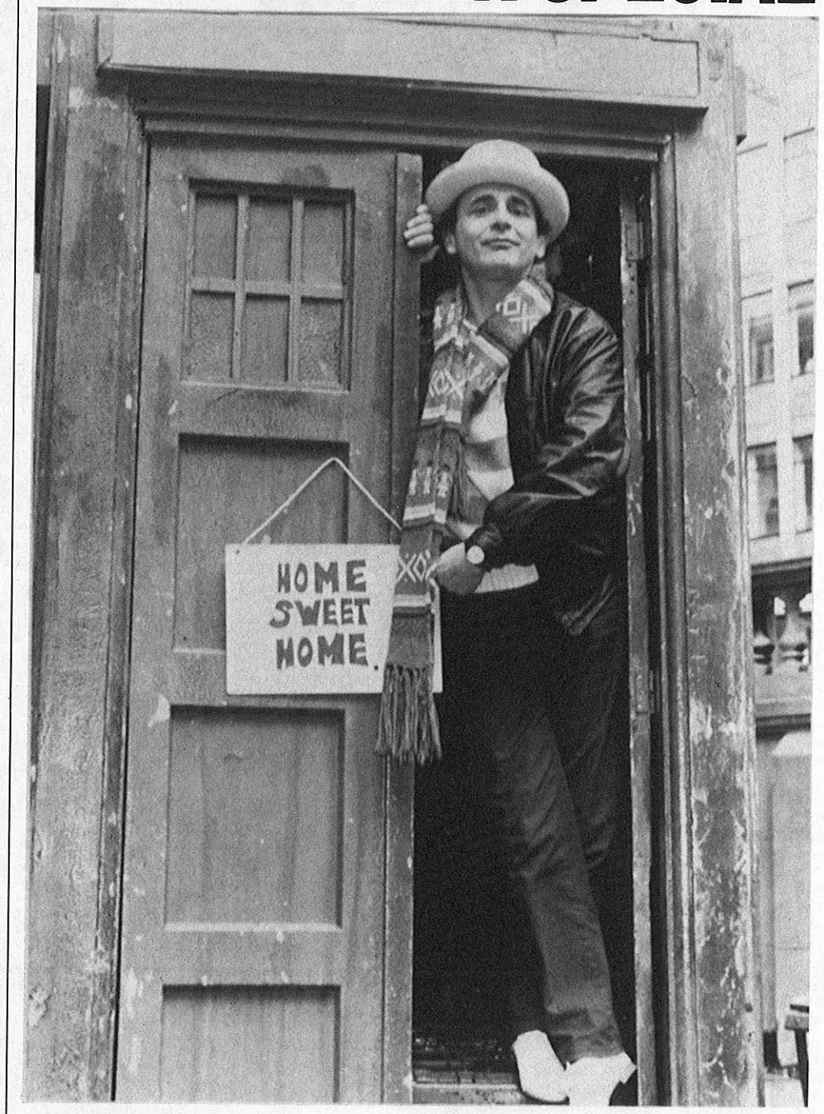

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By far the most joyous news of the year was the return of this episode (along with THE FACELESS ONES 3) to the BBC Archives, and for the benefit of readers who didn't attend PanoptiCon VIII, we present a foreward and synopsis of this classic piece of television by J.Jeremy Bentham illustrated with previously unpublished off-screen stills...

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An off-screen still depicting Robert Jewell as the clown in the Christmas Day episode

paradise lost or fawlty towers

ANDREW HARDWICK: Where TIME AND THE RANI was one of the worst WHO stories I have ever seen, with the production team not even trying to present decent entertainment, I am considerably more impressed with PARADISE TOWERS. Andrew Cartmel, by either sheer luck or by design, has commissioned a script that is more or less Nathan-Turner proof; an intelligent satire that actually benefits from the exaggerated performances of the likes of Richard Briers, Brenda Bruce and Elizabeth Spriggs. Nicely complimented by the more serious and more vulnerable characters — such as 'Fire Escape' and 'Bin Liner' — they do much to create an atmosphere of disturbing abnormality within Paradise Towers . . .

GARETH DAVIES: After my letter attacking Tea Time with Granny (sorry, TIME AND THE RANI!), wasn't PARADISE TOWERS amazing ? The acting was superlative and the sets likewise. I wasn't looking forward to Nick Mallet's direction but he used some varied and interesting shots. The violence went a bit OTT in episode 3 but this didn't mar my view of the best story since CAVES OF ANDROZANI . . .

STEVEN GRACE: PARADISE TOWERS is a classic. The script is of such a high quality that one wonders what Stephen Wyatt has been doing up to now writing for radio. All the characters are just that — characters, not people. Undoubtably most fans will sink this story with criticisms of pantomime acting, slapstick humour etc, but one of the reasons I like it so much is the gentle layer of humour, but one which does not detract from the horror which is omnipresent . . .

RICHARD FITZGERALD: PARADISE TOWERS confirms the programme's move back into the style of Graham Williams. However if one studies an equivalent story from that rightly maligned era, THE SUNMAKERS, one finds that the jokes were inserted in the story which contained a believable threat. In PARADISE TOWERS, the jokes are the story and all threats, whether from robot cleaners, cannibalistic old ladies or fascist caretakers are played for laughs. And JN-T says the programme is totally unlike a pantomime !!

I must admit I found part one very amusing but by the second episode the jokes were beginning to wear very thin. I managed a smile once (over the Kang's remark about being taken to the cleaners) but it is clear that Wyatt lacks the subtlety of a Robert Holmes. And since this is deliberately pitched as a jokey story, if you don't laugh at it then there's not much else in it for you, certainly not any drama. Of course there was the toasting fork sequence, but to quote JN-T at the Phoenix convention (DWB#29/30) : "One thing that is fairly adamant is that no household objects should be used to kill people or threaten people." Perhaps his justification for this breach is that the scene was so badly directed that no-one could possibly feel Bonnie was in realistic danger. The only saving grace to the story is that Sylvester McCoy seems to have settled in the role and is turning in a reasonably good performance — with the amount of support he's getting from the production side that's nothing short of a miracle (incredible when you think that despite his poor performance in TIME AND

(YOUR VIEWS continued opposite page)

IT'S an excellent concept to bring to DOCTOR WHO ; the arguments surrounding the architectural develpments of the postwar years leading to the high-rise catastrophes of the 1960s. Design as an end in itself, rather than being applied to the ergonomics of social requirements. The architects created soulless skyscraper prisons which destroyed communities, while themselves choosing to live elsewhere. And in PARADISE TOWERS the people get their revenge by deciding they've had a bellyful of architect Kroagnon and immure him in his own terrible creation.

It should have been possible to have looked at the way in which they subsequently became seperated into the three distinctive groups to which we are introduced — gangs of Kangs, the supervisory Caretakers and the resident Rezzies. Instead, however, we are given an implausible story of an unspecified war which takes off all but the most cowardly of the young men (Pex) — and yet, mysteriously, does not claim the younger members of the Caretaker staff.

It should have been possible to have established a credible community created and defined by the surroundings they are obliged to inhabit. But the basic premise is never properly explored, and does not stand any real examination. Why should the original inhabitants have "trapped his bodiless mind" in the basement in order to prevent Kroagnon preventing them from using his Tower — why not kill him ? Why allow Kroagnon enough technology in his prison to allow "corporelectroscopy" and rebirth ? Why put him into a prison of which he himself says : "Nobody knows my Paradise Towers better than I do." ?

Next to this plot implausibility, it seems merely petty to question why a large amount of emergency explosive should be stored in Paradise Towers for the eradication of pests out of control. Or that the Great Architect cannot get his own surveillance system to monitor the swimming pool because surveillance of that area is not allowed by express command of . . . the Great Architect.

More disappointing is the slow disappearance throughout the story of credible characterisation. Given that we accept there are divisions created in the Paradise Towers community by the way in which the different groups each choose to survive (Rezzie acceptance, Caretaker control or Kang rebellion), how can we then accept the miracle conversions which take place in part four : "We're very sorry for what we've done, and we won't do it again." If the Rezzies are selfish pleasure-seekers, can we really see them settling down to a new regime with the Kangs ? And do the Kangs really fall in with the Caretakers just because the Deputy appears in the swimming pool after the youngsters have just declared they will "never ever" join forces ?

The pity is that, despite the fact that examination demonstrates the plotting to be more unalive than any of the Yellow Kangs, many of the performances are excellent. Elizabeth Spriggs and Brenda Bruce provided delicious cameos as Tabby and Tilda before being dragged through an implausibly small hole in their kitchenette wall, and (until the scales fell from her eyes in part four) one could sympathise with Judy Cornwall's Maddy too. All the younger actors were excellent, especially Julie Brennon (Fire Escape) and Howard Cooke (Musclebrain). The disappointments remained Clive Merrison, whose comic timing is far better in Kit Curran, and Richard Briers, whose silly-voiced Chief Caretaker was a paragon of Jobsworth bureaucracy, but whose gravel-voiced Kroagnon eventually left one hungry for less. Compare his possession of a new body with Nicola Bryant's performance in MINDWARP or new-found freedom with Gabriel Woolf's Sutekh in PYRAMIDS OF MARS : the difference is palpable.

It is significant that we have to have Kroagnon explain his own origins to no-one in particular (and, incidentally, us) in part four, rather than the Doctor discovering the truth and combating it. This is partly because episode one took so long to introduce the characters, episode two took so long to run all the characters around endless corridors, and episode three contrived so hard to keep Melanie and the Doctor apart for a gratuitous cliffhanger ending (throttling the Doctor for all of seven seconds).

The Doctor is an ineffectual observer through most of the story, and in the end it is Pex who actually engineers the downfall of the bad guy. And even he is forced into it by (a) one of the clodhopping inept cleaners, (b) his other escape being blocked by thronging Kangs and (c) the realisation that, because he is wearing the Kang bracelet, he has been nominated by the script-writer to be the scarificial saviour of everyone else. It cannot be much consolation to have the wallscrawl 'Pex Lives' as a monument to the foolhardy actions which Stephen Wyatt's scriptscrawls provided for him. (Interestingly, in an earlier version of the script, Pex is seen to climb out of the shaft after the Kang's pseudo-requiem, saying : "Looks like I managed to save Paradise Towers after all." This was too implausible even for this story, it seems).

How sad that Sylvester McCoy's growing likeable Doctor should be lumbered

with a runaround in both opening stories : one recalls how Tom Baker shook off his predecessor in the space of ARK IN SPACE despite the shackles of a studio-bound production and a pre-commissioned script. When will McCoy get to grips with a real problem instead of reacting as a mere observer ? I like him, but he needs some of Hartnell's meddlesome authority to go with the two Baker's dress sense, Troughton's height and Davison's hat and Pertwee's lisp ! He is doomed to a certain frivolity anyway because of his (Mc)coy wink in the opening credits (and incidentally, has anyone else noticed all those bits of stange matter which, although falling towards that ghastly purple nebula, mysteriously defy the laws of physics and refuse to go into orbit with the rest of the debris ?).

And he certainly deserves better in the way of production values. Were there really hundreds of floors full of Rezzies — I didn't count more than half a dozen mop ladies, though I could believe there were many more Kangs. Were those mobile sauna-baths really dangerous cleaners ?? Why does Paradise Towers have identical wallscrawl on every level ?

There's much to like about PARADISE TOWERS. The first two episodes have some wonderful exchanges, and there is a lot of clever stage business, particularly by the Doctor. (There's even a mischievous joke in Kroagnon'n line : "This so-called Doctor Who cares to mock me.") . There was tension in the inexorable climb up the building of the service cleaners, forcing the Tower's survivors into a smaller and smaller space and there was a number of moodily-lit studio sets through which the newcomers picked their uncertain passage among the various dangers.

But there is far too little co-ordination of the various elements which make up the storyline, and so long as DOCTOR WHO clings to the naturalistic it will continue to come up against the problems of credibility which an otherwise laudably innovative script could not avoid. It wasted a brilliant basic idea in a script with a beginning, a muddle and an end. I'd love to say that I thought PARADISE TOWERS was ice hot, but in the end it was No Ballgames, No Flyposts, No Plot — *PETER ANGHELIDES*

Star Rating

39%

SCRIPT	***	ACTING	**½
ORIGINALITY	***½	SETS	*½
DIRECTION	½	COSTUMES	*½
		MONSTERS / ENEMIES	*
		SPECIAL EFFECTS	**
		MUSIC	**½
		OVERALL STORY	*½

THE RANI he's still miles better than Colin Baker. Not saying much, I know) . . .

FREDDIE WRIGHT: I must admit I felt a prat liking TIME AND THE RANI, yet, even for a less cynical fan like myself, PARADISE TOWERS is the most embarrassing farce I have ever had the misfortune to endure. I had to watch the first episode twice to make sure I wasn't dreaming. If this is Cartmel's best, then come back Eric all is forgiven. Even trash like THE TWIN DILEMMA can be excused due to rushed production and low budget but not this travesty. Talented performers like Briers, Merrison, Spriggs and Bruce are made to look like amateurs and Pex manages to be even more excruciating than Langford. Poor old Sly just looks bemused wondering why he is acting in such drivel. DOCTOR WHO died with PARADISE TOWERS. I hope it is laid to rest before the memories of it are tarnished even more.

RICHARD THOMAS: Nathan-Turner has finally gone too far. PARADISE TOWERS makes THE HORNS OF NIMON look good ! Bad scripts, bad acting, bad monsters, bad robots, bad lighting, bad companion . . . What more can I say — the show I once loved is in ruins and I am beginning to wish it would be cancelled just to put us out of our miseries.

JN-T MUST GO NOW, if not all is lost and he will have destroyed a show that we all loved and a once much-respected British institution.

PAUL HASSALL: I am finished with this season. I have just seen the worst trash to go out under the DOCTOR WHO banner, namely PARADISE TOWERS. The series is now a complete joke and total slapstick. Nathan Turner has got the show he always wanted; a pathetic pantomime! This farce is not really DOCTOR WHO at all. It is a completely different show simply abusing DOCTOR WHO's once-proud name. What has happened to the quality scripts, actors, etc.? The show is now an insult to the memories of people like William Hartnell, Roger Delgado, David Whitaker, to name but three.

I doubt whether I shall ever want to watch DOCTOR WHO again. How can anyone defend this garbage ? It's beyond me. Nathan-Turner must leave NOW !!

JONATHAN BURT: I feel like crying. PARADISE TOWERS is a very good example of how NOT to produce TV sci-fi. It lacked, as Victor Pemberton put it, the three vital ingredients: the script constitutes muck. It is rubbish, which is a crying shame because it had all the good points needed and a sound plot basis, but unfortunately neither Wyatt or Cartmel bothered to develop and kind of plot or story whatsoever. Undoubtably JN-T has influenced Cartmel to blend in with his pantomimesque approach to production, but even the script has fallen below pantomime level. On the acting side, I feel sure that unchained from JN-T's shackles, McCoy has the ability to be a very good Doctor. Unfortunately his performance is currently not believable nor well-acted and until it is DOCTOR WHO will continue to lose viewers. They may have got rid of the clown but the circus goes on. And finally, I'm sorry Mr.Mallet but unimaginative point-it-at-the-actors-and-let-them-get-on-with-it camera shots and yet more laughable monsters of the neon-bulb variety simply does not work on DOCTOR WHO (even if it does on Crossroads) — it stagnates an already sterile production . . .

DAVE ALLEN: ". . .And now on BBC1, episode 4 of PARADISE TOWERS. Last week Mel supplied most of the laughs as she shot up and down a wonky lift shaft screaming outrageously at nothing in particular and accompanied by an actor who had wondered in from Galloping Galaxies in the next studio on his way to the loo. The Doctor, meanwhile, pretended the whole thing was a non-event and proceeded to occupy himself in some of the silliest scenes ever to occur in the series (this colour slide soon to be available from Whomobilia shows him admiring the glossy costumes of some madcap caretakers). Shocks were supplied by two old panto dames getting swallowed by their kitchen sink and Richard Briers acting like Hitler in drag."

What with Doddy in the next story, someone please pinch me and tell me it's all a bad dream — PLEASE ?

MATTHEW HARRIS: I am extremely angry. I am angry that the Red Kangs are the most badly-acted characters ever to curse the show. I was angry that an actor with Sylvester McCoy's ability could not even put the stress on the right words — his inflections and intonations are just plain wrong. Above all, I was livid at the level of childish humour in this episode. Maybe I'm just being obtuse, but from where I was sitting it just looked silly! Did Mallet really think the acting was good ? Did anyone really believe that the humour would be amusing to anyone? The series is being ground to dust. The papers, from The Mirror to The Guardian, all think the new season stinks and so do the public; whatever Nathan-Turner may lie, the viewing figures are DOWN . . .

PAUL DUMONT: Take a decaying tower block — an ideal claustrophobic setting — add rebel gangs trapped into playing futile games and caretakers tied to the rulebook, vague hints of a war and a Great Architect, mysterious deaths, strange robots, something nasty in the basement, and contrast the ritualistic lives of the humans with the ultra efficiency of automation. Result: a strong storyline full of drama, mystery, atmosphere, tension.

Make those rebel gangs as infantile as possible, cast a comedy actor to play the lead villain as melodramatically as he can with a false moustache, show exactly how the deaths are occuring and signal the culinary habits of Tabby and Tilda as early as part 1 played by two distinguished actresses hamming it up as cosy old biddies instead of terrified OAPs as much victims of circumstance as the others. Give the thing in the basement Mickey Mouse eyes, add awful slang — "ice hot" — and some scenes of the Doctor drinking Fizzade from a machine he's vandalised and of Mel eating crumpets, lumber the Caretakers with "Rule 4567A sub para 891011" jargon and Nick Mallet for good measure. Result: PARADISE TOWERS

SID SMITH: The sheer suspense of listening to the speaker — the air of menace as he paused for breath not to mention the tense direction and the imaginative use of the camera was all too much. Not wishing to bring on a premature cardiac condition, I was forced to stop watching Channel 4's Comment slot and switch back to DOCTOR WHO on BBC1 !

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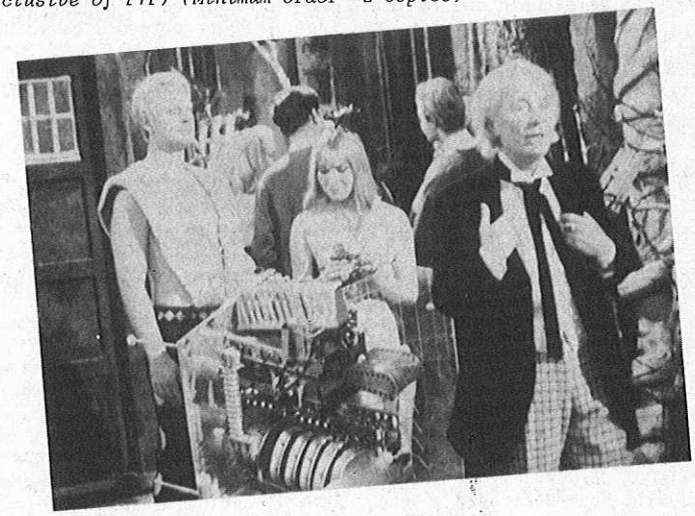

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